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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: WORLD FOOD PROGRAM EXECUTIVE BOARD 2010 FIRST REGULAR
SESSION: HAITI, HUMANITARIAN CLUSTERS AND SIR JOHN HOLMES

REF: UN ROME 15

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Summary

1. The 2010 First Regular Session of the WFP Executive Board was held in Rome from February 8-11. Highlights from the session included: the election of a new Executive Board Bureau, an update on Haiti, guest speakers OCHA Under Secretary General Sir John Holmes and economist Jeffrey Sachs, and a progress report on the Financial Framework Review. In addition, the Board bade farewell to Deputy Executive Director (DED) for External Relations Staffan de Mistura, who will take up duties as the Secretary General's Special Representative for Afghanistan on March 1, and congratulated WFP Deputy COO Ramiro Lopes da Silva, who will replace de Mistura as DED for External Relations. Lastly, two Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRROs) were approved for Iraq and Afghanistan for a total of \$1.434 billion. End summary.

Opening Session: Haiti Earthquake Response Efforts

2. Executive Director Josette Sheeran reported on her recent visit to Haiti, citing the earthquake response as 'the most complex WFP operation ever launched' on account of major infrastructure damage, mass-scale urban programming and other factors. WFP is leading in Haiti three of the Humanitarian Clusters activated by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (food, logistics, and emergency telecommunications) as well as operating the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS). Sheeran also provided an update on the WFP Information Network and Global System II (WINGS II) and how IT improvements helped WFP's global humanitarian responses (e.g., in Haiti, administrative issues were handled more efficiently, allowing field staff more time to focus on delivering food and meeting emergency needs). On security, she highlighted WFP's

increased efforts toward improving security in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and her work as chair of the UN High Level Committee on Management leading security improvements for the UN globally. Lastly, she noted the progress made in the Financial Framework Review, assuring the Board that WFP will remain on track for completion of the review by February 2011.

¶3. In her intervention, Ambassador Cousin recognized WFP's leadership in logistics and management of essential humanitarian clusters, stressing that coordination in a crisis of this magnitude is important and acknowledging WFP's collaboration with an array of civil as well as military partners aimed at securing the distribution of food. The Ambassador further stressed that lessons learned will also include donor responses: donors must ensure that the outpouring of good-hearted assistance does not morph into long-term dependency on humanitarian relief, noting the need to work together to help Haiti create a sustainable and food secure future. These efforts, she noted, should intertwine with the expertise of the private sector, which has also proven to be a valuable partner in response efforts. As a global designer and provider of safety nets, WFP must participate in helping to create this new Haiti, she concluded.

¶4. At the opening session, the Secretariat announced the election of the 2010 Executive Board Bureau:

-- List C (Latin America): President, Ambassador Sabas Pretelt de la Vega, Colombia; and Alternate Ambassador Jose Antonio Marcondes de Carvalho, Brazil;
-- List D (OECD countries): Vice President, Ambassador Agnes van Ardenne, Netherlands; and Alternate, Harriet Spanos, United States of America.
-- List A (Africa): Member, Innocent Mokosa Mandende, Democratic Republic of Congo; and Alternate, Ambassador Mohamed Ashraf Gamal Eldin, Egypt;
-- List B (Asia and Near East): Member, Ambassador Javad Shakhs

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Tavakolian (Islamic Republic of Iran); and Alternate, Ambassador Li Zhengdong, China;
-- List E (Eastern Europe): Member, Jiri' Muchka, Czech Republic; and Alternate, Arsen Vartanyan, Russian Federation.

Special Guests: Sir John Holmes and WFP's Role in Humanitarian Assistance; and Jeffrey Sachs

¶5. WFP's role in Humanitarian System: OCHA Under-Secretary General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Sir John Holmes reflected on humanitarian reform and WFP's role in the humanitarian assistance system. Underpinning UN humanitarian reform efforts, he noted, is the principle of partnership between UN agencies, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other humanitarian actors. He also stated that the response to the Haiti earthquake has been and remains a huge test of the humanitarian cluster approach - 'its biggest so far' - demanding new skills, sufficient dedicated staff with no assigned HQ agency duties to distract them or give rise to the perceptions of conflicts of interest. He extolled WFP's leadership as the global humanitarian cluster lead for food, logistics and emergency telecommunications and for pioneering innovative approaches to relief. With regard to the revamping of the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator system, however, he would like to see the number of WFP applicants rise (so far WFP has submitted five Humanitarian Coordinator applicants to the pool).

¶6. In conjunction with Holmes, the Board considered the WFP policy paper entitled, 'WFP's Role in the Humanitarian Assistance System,' which outlines WFP's engagement in and contributions to the humanitarian system, including emergency preparedness, policy development, and needs assessments. The U.S. recognized WFP's strong footprint in the humanitarian arena and encouraged WFP to continue establishing effective partnerships. The U.S. also commended joint efforts among

humanitarian actors aimed at improving needs assessments and vulnerability analysis.

¶7. In a separate session, economist Jeffery Sachs expressed his belief in ending poverty by 2025 through the use of new technologies, 'brainpower' and resolve to bring about an increase in agricultural production necessary for food security and development in Africa and elsewhere. He opined provocatively on the 'complicated international scene' as a primary constraining factor in food security progress -- too many organizations involved, time/energy lost in turf wars and donor coordination, and insufficient or misdirected funding. On Haiti, he appealed to the Board to 'use WFP's mandate broadly,' suggesting that the critical planting season would be missed if WFP waited to coordinate with others. A number of donors, including the United States, strongly responded to correct his misperceptions and statements about development assistance and WFP's role. Specifically, the U.S. Ambassador cautioned against expanding WFP's mandate beyond the Organization's agreed mission. On the margins Executive Director Sheeran apologized to several donors (the U.S., ECHO, etc.) for some of his remarks.

Annual Report for 2008 to ECOSOC and FAO Council

¶8. The Board approved the 2008 Annual Report to ECOSOC and FAO Council, the focus of which was on WFP's role in UN system-wide efforts to increase coherence and support country-led efforts to address continuing food and financial crises. These included working with the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Food Security (HLTF) to implement the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA); piloting innovative initiatives such as Purchase for Progress and cash/vouchers; and partnering with new private sector entities on a nutrition improvement strategy. The report also highlighted WFP's lead on UN Joint Crisis

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Initiatives (JCIs) in food security with FAO, IFAD and the HLTF.

Financial, Oversight and Evaluation Matters

¶9. Update to the 2010-2011 Management Plan: WFP's Program of Work for 2010 increased by \$595 million (as of December 31, 2009), bringing the biennial total to \$9.55 billion. The document detailed the requirements for the top countries responsible for the increase [Pakistan (\$240 million for increased IDPs and increased security costs after the October bombing), Sudan (\$110.5 million largely for higher transport costs in Darfur), Afghanistan (\$80.4 million) and Ethiopia (\$49.4 million)]. The U.S., echoed by Australia, expressed appreciation for WFP's continued efforts to improve the update document. WFP advised that the update document was not inclusive of any new requirements resulting from the Haiti earthquake operations which currently are estimated at \$300 million for the first six months of 2010. The June update will include Haiti operations which may total an estimated \$800 million.

¶10. Financial Framework Review: The U.S. and the EC issued a joint statement cautioning WFP on UN coherence in the recovery definition that may lead to WFP deviating from its core mission, and insisted that WFP include in country programs those extended recovery and prevention elements that are developmental in nature. Responding to donor concerns on the need for expediency, WFP communicated its goal to shorten the approval timeline of a new framework to November 2010 through the extensive use of informal consultations to gauge Board acceptance of framework elements.

¶11. Revised Fee for the External Auditor for the 2008-2009 Biennium: The Board was asked to approve a 19 percent fee revision for additional work performed by the External Auditor for International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)

adoption, WINGS II rollout and an hourly fee increase for the biennium (GBP 114,800 for a total contract to GBP 512,000). Several Board members took exception to the lack of clear procedure and prior Board authorization surrounding the decision to allow audit workload increases given the direct reporting relationship between the External Auditor and the Board (reftel). As a resolution, the Executive Board Bureau verified a slightly lower increase (GBP 104,000) with the External Auditor and WFP assured that future contracts will utilize price ceilings which cannot be exceeded without prior Board approval.

¶12. Other matters: The External Auditor report on the IPSAS dividend noted that WFP is taking advantage of new and better information provided under IPSAS. The U.S. expressed support for the recommendation that WFP management more frequently review and analyze financial metrics available to them under IPSAS. The Board also considered a report from the External Auditor analyzing WFP's strategic planning process in the Uganda Country Office. How WFP will carry forward the process in other countries, and whether the Board would consider the recommendation to review a country strategy in lieu of the current practice of individual project documents, will be the subject of future informal consultations. With regard to WFP's progress on the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) recommendations, WFP currently has no intention of submitting Internal Audit directorship appointments to the Board for approval.

¶13. Evaluation: The Board considered the first joint evaluation by WFP and FAO on how these organizations have improved Information Systems for Food Security (ISFS); and, how far these systems have contributed to decision-making. The U.S. emphasized the need to increase incentives for information system capabilities to be built and sustained at national and regional levels. Members approved a revised decision to include language proposed by Brazil encouraging WFP to work with the

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Committee on World Food Security (CFS) toward more effective and continuous ISFS institution-building.

Highlights from Regional Presentations and Project Approvals

¶14. Regional and Country Director gave presentations, which can be found at <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/resources/wfp216248.pdf>, as follows:

A) Eastern and Southern Africa: Temporary suspension of food distribution continues in Southern Somalia. In Ethiopia, WFP and the Government have engaged in a process to improve food management accountability and reporting. In the rest of the region, WFP is working with partners [UN sister agencies and GAIN (Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition) in the area of nutrition; FAO, AGRA and IFAD in the Purchase for Progress Initiative; and governments as they prepare CAADP plans] to ensure that hunger reduction is embedded in various processes.

B) Sudan: Conflict and displacement in Darfur have stabilized but insecurity remains a real threat. Last year's drought caused a 30-40 percent drop in production and will have huge implications for WFP's caseload, up to 11 million from 6.5 million last year, with highest vulnerability in the Southern Sudan regions of Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria.

C) West Africa: WFP is stepping up assistance in the face of a potential major food crisis in Niger and Western/Central Chad. Despite an assessed 3.4 million beneficiaries in need, no formal request for assistance has been received from the Government of Niger. The Central African Republic continues to face complex humanitarian challenges, compounded by the influx of refugees from the DRC.

D) Asia: In Sri Lanka, 160,000 IDPs have returned, while many still remain in camps due to the threat of land mines. In Pakistan, some IDPs have returned; in response to instruction from UNDSS to reduce staff presence, some WFP staff members are

working from Bangkok.

E) Middle East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia: In Yemen, WFP is facing some of the highest food insecurity and malnutrition rates in the world, particularly in the Saada province where the humanitarian situation is deteriorating. In Gaza, WFP's cash and voucher program is being expanded.

F) Latin America and the Caribbean: Regionally, unemployment and poverty on the rise. In Haiti, the need for emergency preparedness and for predictability of funds for a better response was noted. In Guatemala, the effects of extreme weather patterns have augmented vulnerability. WFP is working with the Government of Guatemala to reinforce social safety nets in children under 24 months of age.

¶15. The Board approved two PRROs, one for: Afghanistan, 'Relief Food Assistance to Tackle Food Security Challenges, which will reach 7.6 million beneficiaries with 816,000 metric tons for a total value of \$1.2 billion, and a second for Iraq, 'Support for Vulnerable Groups,' which will reach 1.7 million beneficiaries with 189,000 metric tons of food for a total value of \$234 million. For Afghanistan, the U.S. expressed appreciation for the emphasis on gender and encouraged continued rigor in this area. For Iraq, the U.S. encouraged WFP to target programming in Diyala and Baghdad, the areas of highest returnees, and requested WFP to come back to the Board via correspondence on how it will address performance indicators that do not include specific targets.

Staff Movements

¶16. At the closing session, key staff movements were announced:

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-- Staffan de Mistura (Sweden/Italy), WFP Executive Director for Communications and External Relations since July 2009, will be leaving WFP to become UNSG's Special Envoy to Afghanistan;

-- Ramiro Lopes da Silva (Portugal), currently Deputy COO, has been promoted to Deputy Executive Director of Communications and External Relations, replacing de Mistura.

--Denise Costa Coitinho, REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger) Coordinator, returned to the World Health Organization at the end of her secondment to WFP.

COMMENT

¶17. USUN Rome thanks all field and Washington staff who contributed with comments and key input on project and evaluation documents, which provided depth to U.S. interventions. USUN Rome will continue to ensure WFP remains focused on delivering emergency food aid and will assist in leveraging WFP expertise on logistics, local/regional procurement, vulnerability assessment mapping, productive safety nets and strengthening countries capacities to reduce hunger, in furtherance of the Administration's global food security strategy.

¶18. Minimize considered.
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